GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PERSONNEL,PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4096
ANSWERED ON:19.04.2000
ACCOUNTABILITY IN ADMINISTRATION
ABDUL RASHID SHAHEEN;RAM TAHAL CHOUDHARY

Will the Minister of PERSONNEL,PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the absence of the provision of accountability, corruption and negligence are increasing day-by-day in the administration;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government in this regard;

(c) the efforts made by the Government to create a sense of responsibility in the administration;

(d) whether the present working system is quite unsatisfactory;

(e) if so, whether there is an urgent need to revamp the Indian Administration System; and

(f) if so, the action being taken in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS

(SHRI ARUN SHOURIE)

(a),(b),(c),(d),(e)&(f) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.
The Government has tried to incorporate measures of accountability in administration through various means such as Annual Action Plans of Ministries/Departments of Government, Annual Confidential Reports of government officials, fixation of levels for decision-making, audit of the government accounts by the Comptroller and Auditor General and the examination of the functioning of administrative Ministries/Departments by the Parliamentary Committees.
2. Administrative efficiency and effectiveness are matters which receive the attention of the Government on a continuous basis. Measures have been taken to make the administration accountable, transparent and responsive to the needs and expectations of the people.
3. The Government has taken up simplification of laws, rules and procedures for improving efficiency of organisations. Towards this end, over 40 Departments have undertaken, through expert Task Forces or by internal exercises, a detailed review of laws, regulations and procedures administered by them. The Government had, in addition, set up a Commission on Review of Administrative Laws on 8 May, 1998 to make recommendations for repeal/amendment of laws, regulations, procedures, legislative processes etc. The Commission submitted its report on 30 September, 1998. The important recommendations of the Commission include recommendation for repeal of almost 50% of Central Laws (1382 out of 2500 Laws), expeditious amendmends to a critical list of 109 identified Acts, documentation of administrative laws

(rules, regulations, executive instructions) by all the Ministries/Departments, harmonisation of statutes and laws with reference to the perspective of domestic and foreign investors, trade and industry, consumers, exporters and importers,and development of a viable alternative disputes resolution machinery. The Government had constituted a Standing Committee under the Chairmanship of Secretary(Personnel) for monitoring the follow-up action on implementation of the recommendations contained in the report. Most of the Ministries/Departments have initiated action to bring about suitable amendments/modifications in and repeal of the Acts and Laws being administered by them with a view to improve service delivery and transparency in the functioning of Government.
4. The Government has also taken measures to bring more and more transparaency and accountability in its functioning. A large number of Ministries/Departments with considerable public interface have already introduced Citizens` Charters indicating broadly the quality of service, the public would be entitled to, within a specified time frame. Information and Facilitation Counters have been set up by 45 Ministries/Departments/Central Government Organisations to provide information on procedures and the schemes of the concerned organisation as well as to access information pertaining to the status of individual cases.

5. In addition to the specific measures mentioned above, the Government has taken certain other steps to improve accountability in administration. These steps include modernisation of Government offices, software package to track the movement of files, documentation of best practices in Central and State Government organisations, etc.
6. The work of the Central Government in the field of combating corruption in public administration has been considerably stepped up during the last few years. The Annual Action Plan prepared by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions envisages

three-pronged strategy for containment of corruption in public life. It was initially launched in 1985-86 and is being continued on annual basis. The broad features of the Action Plan are as follows :-

1) Preventive Vigilance;
ii) Surveillance and detection; and
iii) Deterrent punitive action.

Under these three major areas, the Action Plan seeks to cover as many aspects of the vigilance set-up as possible. The Government has been giving due importance and priority to the areas of Preventive Vigilance, with a view to minimising the areas of discretion - especially at lower levels. The Government has also taken several steps in the recent past to strengthen the institution of CVC and that of the CVOs, so that the Vigilance machinery could be made more effective.